

Appl. No. 10/643,447
Amdt. dated June 2, 2006
Reply to Office Action of March 2, 2006

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending. Claims 1-10 and 14-17 are allowed. However, Applicants note that claim 4 was cancelled in a previous Office Action response. Claims 11-13 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 and under 35 U.S.C. §103. Claim 11 has been objected to for reasons relating to claim formality. Claims 11-13 and 18 have been cancelled in this Office Action without prejudice.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowed subject matter.

Claims 11-13 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,637,173 to Wheeler (hereinafter "Wheeler"). Claims 11-13 and 18 have been cancelled as indicated above, thereby rendering the Examiner's rejection of those claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) moot. Applicants, therefore respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 11-13 and 18 based on 35 U.S.C. §102(e).

Claims 11-13 and 18 have also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,115,984 to Paradis (hereinafter "Paradis"). Claims 11-13 and 18 have been cancelled as indicated above, thereby rendering the Examiner's rejection of those claims under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) moot. Applicants, therefore respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 11-13 and 18 based on 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

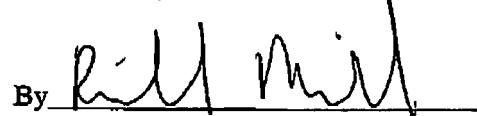
In view of the Examiner's indication that claims 1-3, 5-10, and 14-17 are allowed, and because the remaining rejected claims have been cancelled, Applicants believe that the foregoing Response is fully responsive to the Office Action. A Notice of Allowance formally indicating allowance of claims 1-3, 5-10, and 14-17 is respectfully and earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicants' attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

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Applicants believe that no fees are due with the submission of this Response. If any charges are incurred with respect to this Response, they may be charged to Deposit Account No. 503342 maintained by Applicants' attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

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